

century they menaced the northern frontiers and much of the time occupied part of China proper. It is from Khitan that Cathay is derived, the name by which medieval Europe knew North China, and it is from the same source that Khitai, the present Russian designation for China, has come. The Khitan rulers were cattle breeders and endeavored to preserve their culture uncontaminated by Chinese ways. Indeed, their nobles were punished if they studied Chinese or took the civil service examinations. The commoners kept their old ways and intermarried little with the Chinese. The Chinese in the Khitan realm south of the Great Wall were taxed heavily but otherwise retained their own customs.

Chu Wen, as we have seen, made an end to the enfeebled Tang and set himself up (907) as the first monarch of the Hou Liang, or Later Liang. He was troubled both by external foes and by dissensions in his family and in 914 was murdered by his eldest son, who feared for his own succession to the throne.

In 923 the Later Liang was overthrown by Li Tsun-hsii, a general of Turkish stock, whose father, Li K'o-yung, had served under the T'ang and had been granted their family name, Li. On the downfall of the T'ang, Li K'o-yung set up a state in what is now Shansi and waged war on Chu Wen. The dynasty inaugurated by Li Tsun-hsii had its capital at Loyang and was, because of the imperial surname Li, called the Hou T'ang, or Later T'ang.

The Later T'ang was, in its turn, terminated, in 936, by one of its own generals, Shih Ching-t'ang, also of Turkish stock. Shih Ching-t'ang, although son-in-law of the next to the last Emperor of the Later T'ang, plotted against the line and

called to his aid the Khitan. When, by their assistance, he overthrew his master and founded a new dynasty, the Hou Chin, or Later Chin, he paid them tribute and called their ruler the Father Emperor and himself the Child Emperor. Shih Ching-t'ang's son and successor attempted to throw off the suzerainty of the Khitan, but, instead, was carried into captivity.

The throne thus left vacant was occupied (947) by a general of the late dynasty, Liu Chih-yuan, also of Turkish descent, who forced the Khitan to retreat. His dynasty, the Hou Han, or Later Han, was even more short-lived than those of its three